

Meeting of Commissioners
Cold War Working Group
U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs
Held at the Marriott Grand Hotel, Moscow, Russia
16 April 2003 from 1000 to 1430 hours

Representing the U.S. Side:

Mr. A. Denis Clift

- Co-Chairman Cold War Working Group (CWWG)

US-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs (USRJC)

Major Matt Kristoff, U.S. Army

- Senior Analyst, CWWG, Joint Commission Support Directorate (JCSD)

Mr. Yuri Boguslavsky

- Chief, JCSD-Moscow

Mr. James Shonborn

- Deputy Chief, JCSD-Moscow

Ms. Irina Koryakina

- Administrative Assistant, JCSD-Moscow

Representing the Russian Side:

General Major Konstantin Viktorovich Golumbovskiy

- Deputy Co-Chairman, USRJC

Colonel Vladimir Konstantinovich Vinogradov

- Co-Chairman, CWWG

Ms. Natalia Mikhailovna Levina

- Executive Secretary, USRJC

Also in attendance:

Rear Admiral (RADM) Boris Gavrilovich Novyy, Expert Researcher, CWWG

Interpreters: Yelena Watson, Victor Polishchuk

Mr. Clift opened the meeting by stating that it was a pleasure to be back in Russia.

Gen. Golumbovskiy welcomed Mr. Clift and informed him that General Zolotarev could not make it to the meeting but sends his best wishes.

Mr. Clift thanked RADM (Ret.) Novyy for his fruitful work concerning incidents in the Barents and Baltic Seas.

8 April 1950 Incident

RADM Novyy stated that he reported to Gen. Golumbovskiy about his work a month ago, but soon after he found several more interesting details. Novyy stated that, based on results from available documents, conclusions were made in April-May-June 1950 that there were no bodies or wreckage discovered during the Soviet search effort. In April 2003, RADM Novyy found documents which were not included in reports from 1950:

- The first document came from a fishing trawler working in the general area of the crash. Its crew discovered aluminum aircraft parts and a can of processed meat made in the USA. The trawler documents illustrated this area on a map. The area was outside the official search area and was located in international waters (the Soviet search took place in an area closer to shore, in Soviet territorial waters). The recovered plane parts were turned over to Soviet authorities, who sent them to a facility in Moscow for analysis. The parts were identified as having come from a U.S. PB4Y "Catalina," which the U.S. had supplied in large quantities to the Soviet Union as part of the Lend-Lease program. A general discussion ensued, during which Gen. Golumbovskiy commented on what an excellent plane the Catalina was and that, in hindsight, it was entirely possible that the parts were misidentified as having come from a Catalina. Both the Catalina and the PB4Y2 Privateer used many interchangeable parts, and the Russian engineers were most familiar with the Catalina. RADM Novyy conducted archival research concerning Catalina losses in that area for a five-year period spanning the Privateer's loss, and he discovered that no Catalinas were missing. He said that this is significant because the analytical reports from the experts in Moscow stated that the parts recovered still had a large amount of grease with the ball-bearings, showing that the plane had not been in the water for very long.
- RADM Novyy gave a list of recovered aircraft parts to Mr. Clift, who promised to take serial numbers provided to him by RADM Novyy to the USA and see if they can be matched to those of the missing Privateer.
- At about the same time, a Soviet submarine (M-251) found a body with a missing hand but could not load it on board. The body was found at a substantial depth.
- A burnt flight jacket was found washed up on the shore; this was not included in the official reports.

RADM Novyy presented a report about Mr. Strelnikov, who showed him a possible burial site of four U.S. pilots in Baltisk. A relative of Strelnikov's worked at the cemetery in the 1960s and at one point stated that "American pilots were buried here."

Mr. Clift added that in 1997 he was in Baltisk with Colonel Vinogradov, and a sailor told them that part of the Privateer's fuselage was found during the Soviet search with four bodies still strapped-in.

Col. Vinogradov said that other Navy veterans had claimed that the fuselage would not fit on the deck of their boats, so he expressed doubt that a fuselage would have been recovered; however he offered no evidence to support his statement.

Gen. Golumbovskiy said that he sent a letter to the Mayor of Baltisk a month ago asking him to help RADM Novyy in his search. Golumbovskiy added that if we did not have very clear evidence that U.S. servicemen were indeed buried at the cemetery in Baltisk, it would be very hard to get authorities to approve an excavation, since the old graves are right next to, or on top of, the newer ones.

Mr. Clift noted that when we have further documentation, he would contact the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii (CILHI) to ask if they have any suggestions on how to determine the location of the graves with more certainty.

Gen. Golumbovskiy added that a Russian group called "Poisk" that searches for WWII graves has some special equipment (georadar). Golumbovskiy suggested that we should consult with experts and see if this device can determine how many graves are actually located in the area. He noted that this would not be an easy task.

1 July 1960 Incident

RADM Novyy reported that he recently discovered that a Soviet intelligence officer and a photographer were in the Severomorsk regional hospital morgue in October 1960 and took photos of an American "pilot" during his postmortem. The officer (his last name was Tarsun) sent the photos to the head of the intelligence department. Novyy met with a doctor who worked in the hospital, and he confirmed that the military often used the morgue at the city hospital because the military hospital had no cold storage facility. Novyy stated he believed that the information provided by Tarsun was true. He said he would travel to Severomorsk hospital and check the morgue's archives as well as fleet intelligence archives, because copies of the photos could be there. He added that the photos and other documentation might also be at the Military Medical Archives in St. Petersburg.

Gen. Golumbovskiy promised to contact the chief of military archives and ask him to send letters to the Severomorsk archives and others to help RADM Novyy continue his search.

RADM Novyy mentioned that the Chief of the St. Petersburg archives said there were some cases where documents had been kept in the original archives and were not sent to the main archives as directed. Novyy said checking local archives is always a good idea whenever possible.

Mr. Clift requested that the Russian Side keep Mr. Boguslavsky (Chief, JCSD-Moscow) informed when letters are sent to the Ministry of Defense (and other agencies and officials) asking for permission to search local archives. Mr. Clift reminded the Russian Side that Major Eugene Posa's family is very interested in his fate, and all efforts should be directed to assist in its determination.

Gen. Golumbovskiy pledged his full cooperation, and he stated that he would travel to St. Petersburg with RADM Novyy and Mr. Boguslavsky to give more weight to the process and meet the local archive directors.

Mr. Clift next said that Major General Roland Lajoie (Co-Chairman, USRJC) had asked him to raise an issue regarding the April 1950 case. He noted that research indicates that parts of the plane were sent to aviation factory #315 in Moscow. This factory has a website. (A printout of the website was handed over to the Russian Side.) Mr. Clift asked if there is any further information on this factory. He also noted that he had driven within a few blocks of the factory's location while *en route* to the hotel from the airport the previous day.

Gen. Golumbovskiy answered that he has no information on the factory, and the website is just an advertisement. He said that it was likely that parts of the plane had been checked by factory #315, but that nothing was noted in the archives. Gen. Golumbovskiy mentioned that Gen. Zolotarev asked for more information on Factory #315, but it had not been found.

Col. Vinogradov next reminded the U.S. Side that in 1992, F.N. Barannikov (former Minister of Security of the Russian Federation) gave a note to the U.S. Ambassador about finding plane parts and bodies.

MAJ Kristoff said one of the witnesses interviewed by U.S. representatives had stated that wreckage from the 8 April 1950 Privateer was found by the Soviets and sent to factory #315 for analysis.

RADM Novyy reminded the group that in the archival information he recently discovered, aluminum parts of the plane found by the fishing trawler were sent to Moscow for analysis, perhaps to the same factory.

Mr. Clift asked the Russian Side to help RADM Novyy with access to the Pushkino, Podolsk, and Gatchina archives.

Gen. Golumbovskiy repeated that there was no reason for concern, and he would make sure RADM Novyy would have access to the archives mentioned.

Mr. Clift stated that the last issue he wanted to raise concerned archival access in the Far East, since six of the ten Cold War incidents took place there. Mr. Clift reviewed with the Russian Side the histories of the losses of the P2V on 6 November 1951, the RB-29 on 13 June 1952, the RB-50 on 29 July 1953, and the RB-47 on 18 April 1955. The RB-50 that went down near Vladivostok in July 1953 is one of the most complex cases that still need to be researched. Mr. Clift said he has testimony that one witness, Sergeant Kravchenko, saw seven parachutes after the plane was shot down by Soviet MiGs. He reminded the Russian Side that Gen. Volkogonov gave an interview to the BBC, during which Volkogonov stated that the 1953 RB-50 case had many unanswered questions. The son of one of the pilots, Mr. Sanderson, continues to write to the Commission asking

about the fate of his father. Mr. Clift expressed his wish that RADM Novyy continue his work in the Far East to shed more light on this and other cases. He asked the Russian Side to provide Novyy with access to the following archives in the Russian Far East: Air Defense Forces (PVO); Primorsky Krai Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD); Federal Security Service (FSB), and the Border Guards. He thanked the Russian Side for its consideration.

Gen. Golumbovskiy informed the U.S. Side that all these issues are familiar to him. He said he would go to the Chief of Archives and ask him to prepare a plan and to find out what documents are needed and get these issues resolved. He added that at this time he did not have any information on Sgt. Kravchenko's testimony concerning seven parachutes.

Mr. Clift said he would provide records from earlier meetings to remind the Russian Side of this case and the compelling testimony that exists.

Gen. Golumbovskiy said that, in his opinion, if any of the seven flyers survived or their bodies were found, the Russian Side would know their fates. He said there is just one strange incident where the fate of a body is unknown and was "lost"— that of Major Eugene Posa. Golumbovskiy stated that in previous incidents the Soviet Union had always returned the bodies or repatriated the captured servicemen.

Mr. Clift added that the 1953 case is very interesting because U.S. search and rescue forces saw seven live people in the water.

Major Kristoff added that Sgt. Kravchenko served on Russky Island with Soviet Air Defense Forces (PVO), and he personally witnessed seven parachutes in the air following the shootdown. Kristoff re-interviewed Kravchenko in 2001, and his story has stayed the same. He is a very credible witness.

Mr. Clift continued that one live member of the crew was rescued by U.S. forces some 24 hours after the crew went down. The pilot later stated that, while he was in the water, he heard Russian search boat engines, although he could not see them since it was dark.

Col. Vinogradov asked if there are any documents that contain the rescued pilot's testimony. Mr. Clift answered that these documents are now unclassified and that he would send them to the Russian Side in the near future.

Major Kristoff stated that chances are very high, in this case (29 July 1953), that Soviet forces found U.S. crewmembers alive. The U.S. air search and rescue forces arrived in the crash area 12 hours after the RB-50 went down. The aircrews saw at least seven people in the water and knew they were alive because they had activated sea-marker dye in their life vests upon seeing U.S. aircraft circling the area. The rescue forces saw not only people in the water, but also 9-12 Soviet PT boats that were ferrying between the crash site and Vladivostok. The U.S. rescue aircraft dropped one or two lifeboats into the water, and the co-pilot, who was later saved, got into one of them. The U.S. search and

rescue planes had to leave after dark. The rescued co-pilot later stated that the Soviet PT boats were so close to him that waves from their wakes washed over his head.

Col. Vinogradov pointed out that on November 14, 1955, Central Command of the U.S. Air Force officially declared all members of the crew dead. Mr. Clift explained that this procedure is just the legal process in order to provide families of the MIAs with a pension. It does not mean that the person is dead. He said it is the same in Russian law. Major Kristoff reminded the Russian side that the Russian Government passed similar legislation pertaining to its military personnel just this year.

Gen. Golumbovskiy stated that the temperature of the water was about nine degrees Celsius, and due to large waves and bad weather, chances were very good that no one was found. Golumbovskiy believed that if pilots were indeed rescued by the Soviets, they would have been used for propaganda. He reminded all that Soviet officials never missed a chance for good propaganda but later always posted an official protest and returned people and/or bodies. He also stated that in 1993, the U.S. Side was in the Far East archives, but no documents were found. However, Golumbovskiy stated that he was prepared to assist with archival access for future searches.

Other Issues:

Mr. Clift thanked Gen. Golumbovskiy for his work in Kamchatka in 2001 (helicopters, water, logistics, etc.) and said that the U.S. Side really appreciated his efforts. Then Mr. Clift said that Gen. Bezborodov's declassification initiative is extremely important work.

Gen. Golumbovskiy stated that there was a meeting planned with Gen. Baluyevskiy (First Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff). He said that he had asked Gen. Baluyevskiy several times to meet with the U.S. Side, but his requests were denied due to Gen. Baluyevskiy's extremely busy schedule. Gen. Golumbovskiy said that Gen. Bezborodov volunteered to personally meet with Gen. Baluyevskiy to explain the progress of the Commission. Golumbovskiy stated that he was sure this meeting would take place soon. Gen. Golumbovskiy pointed out that the Commission's agreement with General Manilov (Gen. Baluyevskiy's predecessor) lost its weight because Col. Ovchinnikov told Gen. Baluyevskiy that all documents connected with the Korean War have already been seen and nothing else could be done. Gen. Golumbovskiy said he was determined to raise this question again to show that we still need to review and declassify documents from Korean War as well as from the Vietnam War. He also added that he was most certain that Gen. Bezborodov would strongly recommend that Gen. Baluyevskiy meet with Gen. Zolotarev and MG Lajoie. General Golumbovskiy anticipates that we will see results in a couple of months.

Mr. Clift thanked Gen. Golumbovskiy for this report, noting the importance of Congressman Sam Johnson's recent trip to Moscow and the fact that we need to maintain the momentum of our work at the highest level. Mr. Clift thanked the Russian Side for its work on these issues of importance to the Commission. He also mentioned press reports that our Presidents might hold a summit meeting in May in St. Petersburg.

Gen. Golumbovskiy said that President Putin is familiar with Commission's work, but it would be both a very positive thing and very helpful if President Bush would say something about it at the summit. Gen. Golumbovskiy also reminded all present that there are no actual legal documents concerning the Commission's work. Mentioning the good work that we do in the press would further support our work. Gen. Golumbovskiy asked the U.S. Side if it would be possible to find more information about the fates of Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan. Russia has 238 MIAs in Afghanistan and very little information concerning their fates.

Mr. Clift promised to take the Afghan POW issue up personally and to inform the Director of DIA of the Russian Side's interest.

The meeting was adjourned after the usual farewells.